



Dear Crossroads Family,

For many years the Baptist Hymnal was the centerpiece of musical worship in Baptist churches. As you are well aware, times have changed and the hymnal is no longer the source of the music most churches sing. In fact, recent studies indicate that roughly 65% of Protestant churches have moved away from hymnals entirely, opting instead for digital projection and contemporary worship bands. For younger generations, the barrier isn't just the use of a physical book; it is often the "thee" and "thou" of archaic language—largely influenced by the King James Version—which can make these songs feel like dusty relics of a bygone era rather than living expressions of faith. However, to cast these hymns aside simply because they feel "stuffy" is to lose a treasure trove of theological weight. While modern choruses excel at expressing our emotional love for God, the old hymns often serve as a "musical catechism," teaching us rich, systematic Biblical truths in every stanza. One such hymn is "Christ Receiveth Sinful Men." Based on the Pharisaical grumbling in Luke 15:2, this 18th-century text reminds us that our hope doesn't rest on our own "cleanness," but on the scandalous grace of a Savior who welcomes the "sinfulest."

My sermon this Sunday is based on Acts 3, the text of many of our adult Bible study classes. It is entitled "Make the Message Clear and Plain." (Sermon notes are provided below.) The title is an expression found in the hymn mentioned above. The "clear and plain" line actually echoes the biblical command in Habakkuk 2:2 given to the prophet by God. Our God is concerned that we communicate clearly and plainly the gospel message He has given us. Paul illustrated the importance of communicating God's message with transparency and precision in 1 Cor. 14:8 with this metaphor: "if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?"

Sadly, many Christians and many church traditions have confused, complicated, and even changed the simple truth of the gospel. It is crucial that you and I know, understand, and are able to communicate the true gospel clearly and plainly. That will be the focus of my sermon Sunday. The Sermon will be evangelistic, but it will also be a good refresher course about the gospel message on which we base our hope. Even believers need to hear it as well as say it "o'er and o'er again, Christ receiveth sinful men!"

I hope and pray you will be present for Bible study and worship this Sunday. Bring a lost friend or family member with you. The gospel "is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16).

Don't forget that we will have two amazing guest musicians with us this Sunday morning, Randy Anderson and Chuck King. They will also be with us in concert Sunday night at 5:00 p.m. You certainly won't want to miss this Sunday's services.

See you Sunday.

Love,
Bro. Doug

Make the Message Clear and Plain
Acts 3:12-20 & 24-26

When you have an important, shared mission, a _____ and _____ message is essential. Peter's message in Acts 3 includes these clear, consistent points: 1) Jesus _____ on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. 2) God the Father _____ Him from the dead. 3) Many _____ saw the risen Jesus. 4) This was what the _____ foretold. In 1 Cor. 15, Paul said his message and the message of the early church has the exact same points.

Peter's message includes 2 promises: through faith in Jesus, "your sins may be _____" and "times of _____ may come from the Lord." 1 Cor. 15:2 uses a familiar word to describe the promises Peter mentioned: "By this gospel you are _____."

The word translated "wipe out" means that Jesus wiped our sins and mistakes off the _____ of our lives. The expression "times of refreshing" described the time when the _____ would bring refreshing peace and rest. That time has _____ through Jesus. The word "saved" means that Jesus's main ministry wasn't to _____ us how to be better but to _____ us from our sins.

Nothing in the gospel is about cleaning _____ up, doing good deeds, or participating in the _____ of the church to save ourselves. Jesus has done what was necessary for us. The word "gospel" was the title of an announcement sent out by a King or Emperor to his subjects telling them that a _____ had been won on their behalf in battle and that they should come to a _____.

So, Jesus's death on the cross and resurrection from the dead _____ our greatest enemy, _____ the record of our sins away and _____ our soul. This is what it means to be saved. You don't have to achieve them for yourself. You _____ if you wanted.

The Bible says that we all have _____ spiritually and are going to be _____ eternally. The gospel message is that we have a _____. His name is _____. What you need to do is have the faith to _____.

A Few Announcements:

Crossroads Monthly Food & Diaper Drive is next Sunday, May 3. You can use the shopping wish list that will be included in the bulletin or on the website to guide your purchases. Please check the expiration dates and do not donate expired items!

The Quarterly Business Meeting is scheduled for next Sunday, May 3, at 4:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Agendas are available in the foyer.

Dr. Doug Diehl
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